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# Sanctions for Socialism

By

Charles C.  
Hitchcock

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*The basis of Socialism is economic, involving a fundamental change in the relation of labor to land and capital.—a change which will targety affect production, but will entirely revolutionize the existing system of distribution. But, while its basis is economic, Socialism implies and carries with it a change in the political, ethical, technical, and artistic arrangements and institutions of society which would constitute a revolution greater probably than has ever taken place in human history, greater than the transition from the ancient to the medieral world, or from the latter to the existing order of society.*

THOMAS KIRKUP, M. A., in *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

*What is the true basis of ownership? \* \* \* How then do we get any thing? There are three ways. We may create it by our industry; that is, it may be the product of our own labor. It may be given to us by some one who has created it by his industry, either as a free-will offering or in exchange for a product of our own; that is, it may be acquired by gift or purchase.*

*Or we may take possession of it without leave. In the latter case, if we take it from a private owner, the act is called stealing; if from the public fund, it is called speculation.*

LYMAN ABBOTT.

# Sanctions for Socialism.

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PAPER READ BEFORE THE STUDY CLUB, WARE, MASS.,  
BY CHARLES C. HITCHCOCK.

We shall find it necessary in future to shackle cunning, as in the past we have shackled force. The vast individual and corporate fortunes, the vast combinations of capital, which have marked the development of our industrial system, create new conditions and necessitate a change from the old attitude of the state and nation toward property.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Life itself and everything that meanwhile makes life worth living, from the satisfaction of the most primary physical needs to the satisfaction of the most refined tastes, all that belongs to the development of mind as well as body, depends first, last and always, on the manner in which the production and distribution of wealth is regulated.

EDWARD BELLAMY.

By far the greatest problem, the most far-reaching in its stupendous importance, is that problem, or rather group of problems, which we have grown to speak of as the labor question.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

In our consideration of the complicated question of economics it is important that we discover, so far as we are able, the underlying principles. These clearly recognized are likely to simplify the solution of the problems which confront us. Let us then consider what are, or should be, some of the inalienable rights of every individual born into the world.

It is not disputed that we are entitled by birthright to a share, so far as we need, of the life-sustaining atmosphere surrounding us. Why should not every human being be entitled to an equal portion of the earth on which to stand and to till for his support? The sustenance of all mankind comes from the soil. If then we grant that the individual has a right to

life, can there be any doubt that the earth also should be his by inheritance, inalienable except for such time as he may refuse to devote his portion of labor, directly or indirectly, to till it for the maintenance of his existence? Is it not also a self-evident truth that every worker is entitled to the product of his toil—the entire product of his toil?

If we disentangle our thoughts from the shackles of our present laws and customs and look to first principles, we claim it will be made clear that man's rights to the atmosphere, to the soil and to the product of his labor are his by every law of justice.

These points conceded, let us briefly consider what have been the methods of civilized society in these respects.

Fortunately (or unfortunately perhaps, according to one's point of view) the exploiter has found no way to monopolize the atmosphere, hence the life sustaining oxygen of the air remains man's birthright generation after generation.

As to man's right to the earth, we need not go beyond the history of the settlement of our own land to illustrate the general trend of our social development in this particular.

In a new country with vast reaches of land sparsely populated there appears little necessity for restricting the acreage any individual may desire to occupy. And should the scheming leaders in the development of our country enclose their fields and desire personal ownership, laws are framed in their interest without great disturbance to society, for is there not land in abundance yet unoccupied? However, after a time, with the increase of population, land becomes valuable and all desirable acres are preempted. There is none for the dispossessed or for the rising generations except at a price which places them at a decided disadvantage. Let us give an illustration of methods not uncommon within the memory of the present generation.

An enterprising individual pushes out to the borders of civilization and at a moderate cost gains possession of a fertile

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valley comprising, it may be, several thousand acres. He advertises the advantages of his possessions, or perhaps waits a few years for the natural growth of population to overflow into his section. As an inducement to assist in the development of the water power of the valley, a factory site near one of the numerous water falls is donated to a prospective manufacturer. As an additional attraction to settlers, locations for school houses and other public buildings are given to the newly incorporated town.

Laborers continue to flock in to obtain employment on the new buildings and to assist in the development of the water power, or of the near-by mineral lands. Farm lands and building sites are sold at constantly increasing prices. After a time, through the growth of the city, lands which originally cost, perhaps, five dollars per acre, sell for many thousands of dollars per acre.

The original purchaser or his successor reaps enormous returns for lands possessing not a penny greater intrinsic value than when first secured. The favored few are made rich by this increase having performed but little, if any, productive labor. This increase in value, reaped by one or by a few, was created solely by society; but is lost to society through a system of private ownership in land which gives to the schemer the unearned increment which he was only an insignificant factor in creating. Thus has a large part of our population been dispossessed of their rights in land and the grasping few have been made rich at the expense of the toilers.

Let us next consider our industrial evolution. We call to mind that all wealth is created by labor and that without productive labor there can be no wealth.

Before the advent of complicated machinery the worker owned his tools. These, whether primitive loom or other labor saving devices, he used to assist him in his work. His product, whether cloth, shoes, or other commodities, he disposed of at full value.



As we trace industrial development through its rapidly advancing stages made possible by ingenious inventions, including the application of steam, and by the division and concentration of labor in larger and larger aggregates for greater efficiency, we are able to discover how the laborer ceased to own his own tools, and how the greater portion of the product of his labor became diverted to other than his own benefit. We give a typical illustration of the method of this divorce of the worker from his machine which makes our point more clear.

Let us, the members of this Study Club, consider ourselves shoemakers. Each works at his own bench with awl and hammer and such other simple devices as we find useful. The product of our labor we dispose of to such as are in need of it, receiving full value therefor.

With a desire on our part to increase our product and at the same time lessen our muscular effort, we devise a pegging machine, a sewing machine and a lasting machine. In these efforts we are aided, not only by untold ages of the mechanical experience of the race, but by some genius of our number who seeks to display his inventive skill. Through these and other devices we should be able to turn out our usual amount of finished product in perhaps one-tenth the time formerly occupied in labor. Or by working the full day we should produce ten times as many shoes as under our former primitive methods.

Here let us note just what happens in the transition to the methods of today.

The machines we have invented are complicated and costly to produce. From lack of experience we are blind to the results to be obtained through organization, and moreover, we are unable to foresee the dependent conditions which time will make inevitable, as our tools in this evolution of industry pass out of our control. We therefore naturally accede to the plans of some far-seeing neighbor who has become wealthy, perhaps, through the unearned increment in land. He offers

to erect a building, equip it with power machines and give us employment.

The new way which promises so much does in some respects prove advantageous.

We must, however, add that experience has since demonstrated that in other respects the new methods are seriously defective, so much so as to become a menace to the stability of society.

To return to our subject.

Those of us who find work under the new conditions are by a system of piece-work enabled for a time to receive considerably higher wages than we previously were able to earn. But he, whom we now term manufacturer, does not employ all of our number for the reason that by the use of power machinery a very few men will be able to produce far more than our former amount.

Those who are unable to secure work in the factory cannot compete with the machine methods. We do, however, compete with each other in offering our services at a constantly reduced rate rather than be idle. Our children also under the changed industrial order become our competitors.

The labor-assisting machine, so-called, has become the labor-displacing machine."

The result is we are exploited, in that since we are dispossessed of our tools, we receive but a small portion of the product of our labor; the surplus, or such portion of it as is not wasted, being retained by our employer. Our wages are determined in the main by the cost of living. This analysis illustrates how this exploiting was brought about.

History shows that the golden age of labor was in the fifteenth century, the average wage for an eight-hour day being equal in purchasing power to about three dollars of our money. This was under a system of hand labor aided only by the use of individual and primitive tools "and in England with royalty to support." Today by the aid of machinery which in-

creases the productiveness of labor not less than ten and probably more than twenty times, the average wage of the workers for a longer day is not far from one-half as much.

Gladstone was authority for the statement that by the aid of machinery the manufacturing power of the world doubles every seven years.

It was claimed twenty years ago that machinery was doing in Massachusetts as much as fifty million men could accomplish by hand power.

The product of labor belongs to the laborer; there is therefore no sufficient reason why, with the aid of inventions which multiply the product of his efforts many fold, the worker should not receive proportionate returns.

If we but seriously consider a few of the surface facts of current every-day history we should be able to see that some system of distribution other than that which prevails is imperatively demanded.

Statistics show that three one-hundredths of one per cent. of our population own twenty per cent. of the wealth of the nation; that nine per cent. of the population own seventy-one per cent. of the wealth; the remaining ninety-one per cent. of the population therefore own but twenty-nine per cent. of the wealth.

It has been said of one of our capitalists who died a few years ago that he was worth nearly two hundred millions, having commenced life without a dollar. The fortune he accumulated in his short life equaled the total amount of the earnings of one man for three hundred thousand years at the rate of two dollars per day for the entire time without allowance for cost of living. It was reported that during one year (1890) twelve men in New York, all doing business on one street, secured an income aggregating eighty million dollars—a sum exceeding by ten million dollars the combined earnings of the one hundred and eighty-two thousand laborers in four of our New England States at that time.

It is probable that the income of one of our recently retired capitalists for each and every day in the year is far in excess of the average laborer's total earnings during a life time of eighty years.\*

Miss Nellie Mason Auten in the *American Journal of Sociology*, gives facts and statistics regarding the Italian workers in the Chicago sweat shops. These workers were dressmakers, tailors, pant-finishers, seamstresses, etc. Their weekly earnings were found to range from ninety cents to six dollars and twenty-two cents, averaging two dollars and forty-nine cents. They found employment on an average 31.18 weeks in a year. The average yearly earnings for each individual she gives at \$76.74, for each family \$297.29. The average earnings per week, per individual \$1.48, per family \$5.72. She found but twelve who were able to earn over \$300 per year. One hundred and nineteen were earning less than \$100 per year. Forty-three did not exceed \$1 per week. One woman was working sixty hours each week for forty cents per week. One worked sixty-six hours per week for thirty cents per week. In forty-eight weeks she earned fourteen dollars. Facts of similar import to these we have enumerated are constantly being forced on our attention.

The rapid accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few; the severe struggle for the necessities of life on the part of the large majority, and these as a rule the producers; to say nothing of the destitute condition of many; all this in face of the fact of our enormously increased volume of production should go far to make evident the crude state of our economic development.

If a comprehensive knowledge of existing conditions such

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\* The wealth of every millionaire comes from the resources of the land of which he has gotten control, or from natural sources, the chief grist of which falls into his meal bags; or from the public franchises given by the state and created for the state; or from that general advantage which grows spontaneously out of the presence and power of a generally diffused civilization and an increasing population. The least part of it is that which his own efforts has created.

as we have enumerated is not alone sufficient to lead us to seek for a readjustment of our economic system then there are other and fundamental reasons which make the task imperative.

These fundamental reasons as we have shown are: First, the fact that man has been dispossessed from the land, when it is from the soil, in the last analysis, that the sustenance of life must come.

Second, the other fact that the laborer has been divorced from his tools which were designed to assist him, this separation resulting in the diversion to other than his own benefit of the larger portion of the wealth he creates.

At this point we may note, that our customs relative to private property can be shown to have been instituted and established by force, armed force.

The development of society from an early state, which we may call tribal communism, has been through the successive stages of slavery, serfdom, free individual production, to that of combined and specialized effort under machine production, correctly termed a condition of wage slavery.

This continual evolution of society, which the student recognizes as having been in operation since long before the dawn of history, obviously brings us to the next advanced condition—Socialism or Industrial Democracy. Isador Ladof says of Scientific Socialism, "It is nothing else but conscious social evolution, a rational system of philosophy of human social life in the light of the theory of evolution."

In previous ages man had little insight into the meaning of history. He was not able to perceive the tendencies of social development. Today, our advance in Sociology enables us to interpret, as never before, the purpose of current events. This fact alone enables the community to assist understandingly and effectively in the shaping of its future environment.

For these reasons, if for no other, our transition from the

age of commercialism to that form of society which is to follow is likely to be comparatively rapid.

Indeed, social evolution is proceeding with such accelerated speed and the change likely to be brought about will doubtless be so radical, that the movement may fairly be termed revolutionary.

Scientific Socialism, in the opinion of upwards of seven millions of thinking men in Europe and America, to say nothing of the many thousands in other parts of the world, is the only practical state of society in the near future. It is making rapid headway and is the only theory for society which meets with growing favor.

If Socialism is not practical, and I believe only such make this claim who have not arrived at a comprehensive knowledge of social economy, we call upon its critics to present a plan for society which is practical. The car of progress is ever advancing, we either eventually assist in its passage or are ground to earth by its advancing wheels.

Socialism may be said to be scientific co-operation applied not only to production but to the distribution of the product of industry. In other words, Socialism is Scientific Economics. It is the industrial rule of the people, by the people, for the people, and according to well formulated and well developed plans to the end that human effort shall not be wasted in antagonism and strife, but that the effort of each shall in full measure contribute to the welfare of the producer and to society as a whole.

It will not be out of place to give one or two illustrations typical of our present methods.

We are a large town. That each house be provided with some means for disposing of an increasing amount of refuse, became some time ago a social necessity. Here is one method we could have pursued and to an extent did practice.

Each householder could have laid a separate conduit to a distant and safe place for the discharge of the waste.



Another, a more practical and more highly developed plan, would have been for two or three householders on each street to have united and secured the available rights of way, built sewers of ample capacity to drain, not only the premises of the projectors, but all adjacent properties as well. The promoters could have allowed each householder to enter their systems for a charge somewhat less than the cost of a separate sewer for each house and made a good profit on their venture.

A still more advanced method would have been for a few individuals to have secured rights throughout the town and thereby have enabled the promoters to reap a royalty from each householder.

Another plan, the one adopted, denotes a still higher state of social development. The citizens collectively secured well prepared plans, built a system to accommodate all, each paying his proportion of the cost.

The first method, that of a separate sewer for each house, is an extremely extravagant one, the method of individualism falsely so called; a method leading to strife over rights of way and conflict over the unavoidable crossing of one another's course; a method prolific in shoddy construction and annoyance to the public owing to a constant necessity for repairs.

The second and third methods are those of a crude combination,—the commercial system—when carried out in a large way, suggestive of the trust. The last, a truly co-operative method is that which secures the highest economic results with a minimum of friction and allows the greatest amount of true individual freedom—the method termed Socialistic.

At this point I hear a voice, of the banker or the merchant, which says, "But look, under this last system all this work accomplished and it shows no profit, no one makes any money out of it: how can such a system be called a success?"

Sad, isn't it that no one is bled, that no blood flows? Just here lies the merit of the co-operative system.

It is not out of place here to state that interest, rent, profit, have no place in any well developed state of human society.

We often hear it said, and the remark is usually made by such as have given the subject but little thought, "Yes, we fully appreciate the deplorable state of our present society; we admit we have little fault to find with conditions as you picture them under Socialism. The conditions you predict under a social democracy are so radically different, the changes to be brought about seemingly so numerous and so complex that we do not readily trace the process of transition. We ask you to explain how this Socialistic state of society is to be brought about."

We answer; first, let us determine whether or not a change from our warring, destructive, competitive system to one of co-operation is desirable. If we decide in the affirmative our task is already half accomplished, for when we clearly recognize that a change is desirable and necessary, society will not be dull or backward in finding ways and means to successfully accomplish the task.

It may, however, be of interest to briefly consider one line of action now pursued by society, and which not unlikely may be continued in our transition to the Co-operative Commonwealth.

While Socialism or Industrial Democracy may be ushered in in any one of several ways a little observation will make it evident that the very processes we now see in operation, if indefinitely extended, will in time result in common ownership of all the means of production.

The functions of the state are being constantly enlarged. The people collectively, in a way, have for a long time taken possession of, controlled and operated, schools, roads, bridges, parks, mail transportation, certain farm lands, public buildings, water supply, etc. More recently the tendency is to include electric lighting plants, street railways, transportation

lines, employment bureaus, bathing resorts and tenement houses, not to mention many other lines of activity.

The growth of public sentiment is very marked and progress in this direction is likely to be greatly accelerated.

The capital needed by society collectively, for the extension of the co-operative idea, may be acquired in several ways, as now practiced.

A municipality desires land for a school site or for a town farm. The people take possession by right of eminent domain, if they do not succeed in agreeing on a purchase price. The municipality calls on private property holders for an amount sufficient to procure the land and to erect the desired building.

If a tax rate of \$12 per thousand is not sufficient to supply the wants of the community it is made \$15, \$18, \$20 or more, according as the requirements of the community are expressed in their demands when they make their appropriations.

While the levies by the community, for the purpose of carrying out any specified enterprise, may be extended over a series of years, the holders of private property are obliged to pay each his proportion into the public treasury and it becomes public property. We have heard the demands of the municipality, as illustrated, called robbery. You may call it confiscation, it is usually termed taxation. There is no difference in principle, whether the tax rate be \$10, \$20 or \$500 per thousand.

Another method of this transfer of property from private to collective ownership is by tax on industry or occupation. Thousands of dollars are collected in this manner yearly by our own municipality. Other methods are, by demands on the part of the community for a portion of the annual income of the well-to-do, and for a portion of inherited property; in many instances the larger the income or the inheritance the greater the proportionate demands of the state.

State ownership and control extended to include all lines of transportation and communication, ownership and operation

of all mines, should not and will not stop here. The public ownership idea restricted to what are called public utilities will not be likely to furnish any very great amount of relief from the evil effects of our present system. The progress would be in a Socialistic direction only. The state, i. e., the people collectively, must acquire control of productive industry as well. Why should not the people have their oil as well as their mail delivered at their doors by the people's agents? The oil industry is fairly well organized and ready for government ownership. This ownership would include oil lands, wells, refineries, pipe and transportation lines, tank cars, local tanks and delivery wagons.

And thus with other industries including those of coal, steel, sugar, flour, beef and those of the various textiles, etc. The business agents for Rockefeller and others would be equally pleased to do the same sort of work for the people.

In taking over private industries to public ownership, it should be plainly stated that the Socialist does not propose remuneration on an inflated valuation. Any and all industry can be organized by the people, so far as manufacturer and distribution are concerned. Their ability in this direction is practically demonstrated in that wonderfully effective branch of the public service, the Postal Department. It is not until ownership of the productive industries of the nation is vested in the people collectively, that the desired radical and far-reaching changes in the conditions of society are likely to appear. And again, the Socialist claims that one more factor is essential before we can become in reality a true social democracy, namely, the state must pass over to the control of the producers, for, recollect, it is a fundamental principle of the Socialistic philosophy that the workers themselves shall organize and control the productive forces of society in the interest of all producers; it is then that conditions will **best** favor equality of opportunity, the abolition of **class distinctions**, and bring within the reach of all, immeasurably

improved material support and surroundings, a larger individuality, education, leisure, a better physical and freer ethical growth.

Through the development of conditions which are fast becoming unbearable the working man is growing restless and aggressive under the existing system which so favors his exploitation.

It is owing to our false theories of economics and to the resulting state of unrest and dissatisfaction on the part of the producer that we are face to face with a threatened revolution which may be orderly and peaceful, or which may culminate in a violent upheaval in society. Most questions, if not all, relating to the welfare of society, resolve themselves primarily to a consideration of economics. It is in a study of economics that we find the sanctions for Socialism.

The more intelligent and thoughtful among the producers, through the general extension of educational facilities, are rapidly being led to a comprehensive knowledge of the economic principles involved in their struggle for existence.

And herein do we find encouragement that the necessary changes in our methods of distribution will be peaceful although, perhaps, quickly brought about. It is to avoid disastrous social results that every effort, in a thousand ways, is put forth by the Socialist to disseminate sound economic information.

To use the words of Mr. Wilshire, "The mission of the Socialist is to prepare society for an inevitable change and so to prevent dangerous and stupid resistance to an inevitable evolutionary development."

As a closing thought we present this antithesis:

The competitive system means anarchy, destruction, darkness, death.

Co-operation is the very opposite—construction, aspiration, light, life.

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